

Regional Administrator, Alexandra Dunn

Congressman Neal Event

June 6, 2018

Remarks

- It's a pleasure to be here with all of you today. This is the first time a Region 1 RA has had the opportunity to address so many members of the House at the same time. Thank you to Congressman Neal for organizing.
- Introduce yourself
- I had the pleasure of talking with many of your regional staffers last month at our annual Congressional Staff briefing.
- I also had a great opportunity to meet with many of you in May here.
- That's a great opportunity for us to bring everyone together and talk on a large scale about the issues we are dealing with, and then break out state by state to talk more specifically to issues in your district or state.
- I thought I'd talk to all of you today about some of the stuff we are working on in the Region.
- As you know we are focused on a **back to basics agenda**- meaning we are re-focusing our attention to our authorities to protect clean air, water and land.

Let's go back and dive in a bit more to what Back to Basics looks like in Region 1?

- For one thing, it means we are making progress on Superfund and other Hazardous Waste sites.
- EPA HQ developed a Superfund Task Force- to make recommendations for areas of focus around the country.
- We have a few of our sites on the **Task Force Radar**:

- New Bedford Harbor
- Raymark
- Mohawk Tannery
- Centredale Manor
- I was in New Bedford yesterday and the progress there is unbelievable.
 - EPA is working with our state and local partners to return the New Bedford Harbor environment to a healthy state once again.
 - The cleanup is well on its way.
 - In 2013 EPA finalized a \$366.25 million cash-out settlement with the main responsible party at the site.
 - EPA estimates the majority of the cleanup will be complete within about 5 years, instead of the much slower pace previously projected.
 - Because the cleanup is moving so quickly, the city, state and EPA are able to focus on a number of redevelopment opportunities.
 - These include studies on potential reuse of EPA shoreline support facilities, coordination of the City's plans for a "Riverwalk" with EPA's cleanup of the Upper Harbor shoreline, and integration of EPA authorized/State-sponsored navigational dredging with the construction of port facilities.
- Then, there's of course Raymark and GE.
 - For Raymark: I had the pleasure of going to Raymark to see the site a few weeks back. Progress is being made with the help of and strong partnership with the State of Connecticut, the Town of Stratford and the Stratford community. We have prioritized funding for this site, and will be executing the Raymark cleanup this construction season to make a real environmental and economic difference for the people of Stratford.
- And with GE

- GE used PCBs at its Pittsfield, MA facility resulting in widespread PCB contamination of its former plant site, adjacent neighborhoods, and the Housatonic River. Cleanup actions have already been taken at the plant site, adjacent neighborhoods, and the first two miles of the river. The Housatonic River flows from north of Pittsfield, MA through MA and CT and into Long Island Sound.
- EPA's cleanup plan for the "Rest of River," issued formally in 2016, seeks a balanced approach to addressing the PCB risks and includes components of capping/containment of PCBs, roughly 1 million cubic yards of sediment/soil removal, and **off-site disposal** at an estimated total cost of \$613 million.
- GE, two non-governmental organizations (NGOs), a municipal group and a neighborhood representative filed petitions appealing EPA's cleanup decision to the Environmental Appeals Board. The states of MA and CT each filed a brief supporting the Region's choice of remedy.
- We are encouraged by the EAB agreement with EPA's balanced cleanup approach, and that we are working to address the EAB's questions on the disposal of excavated material. At the same time EPA is interested in exploring through mediation if there is a solution that can speed up cleanup, be consistent with the Consent Decree, and be acceptable to the parties.

Brownfields-

- We had a terrific number of brownfields cleanup and assessment grantees this year.
- This year we received \$8.35 million in cleanup and assessment grants out of a total \$54.3 million- that's 15.4% of the national total.
- Shout out to the state of Maine who received the most grants in New England- with 10.

- We are still organizing events in every state- we have done one in Maine already, and we will have one in Rhode Island next week.

Back to basics also means using our authorities in the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act to deal with pollution facing our waterways.

- We are making progress reducing direct discharges into waterways throughout the region.
- Right now, one of our biggest challenges is managing nutrient overloads and stormwater entering waterways.

Nutrients and Stormwater:

- Many of our waterbodies throughout New England- Lake Champlain, Great Bay, Mass Bays, Cape Cod, Narragansett Bay, Long Island Sound (the list goes on...)- are struggling with excess nutrients causing water quality challenges like algae blooms, or worse, cyanobacteria blooms, and diminished fish habitat.
- And I think everyone agrees that we need to make progress.
- The public really cares when their local waters turn bright green, and we are working in partnership with state and local governments, NGOs and Citizen Scientists to continue to make progress on nutrients.

Stormwater is one of the big causes of nutrient pollution.

- On July 1, the MS4 permit updates in Massachusetts and New Hampshire will become effective.
- EPA has worked very hard with local and state officials to develop permits that reflect a practical, common-sense approach to protect and restore waterways.
- With the states, we have conducted extensive training and outreach to help municipalities get ready for the new permit and to provide flexibility in local management practices and while maintaining the highest water quality.

- We have developed an array of training and implementation tools to assist municipalities with implementation.
- Topics have included permit overview presentations, Notice of Intent preparations, town meeting attendance and GPS training.
- We have produced a stormwater management plan template, templates for illicit discharge procedures, and examples of ordinances.

Back to basics means we are working through air quality challenges.

- Earlier this week, our region hosted the National Air Modeling Workshop- it gathered regulators on the federal, state and local level to talk through air quality modeling processes, best practices and creative solutions.
- In my first few weeks on the job, I've heard a lot about the transport of air pollution across state lines.
- This is an area we must look at in partnership with our states, who are doing everything they can to reduce their pollution emissions within their borders. They deserve a lot of a credit for that effort - and we must work together to chart a path toward cleaner air for New England.

Ozone

- Air pollution continues to be an issue in Connecticut. Monitored levels of ozone (smog) exceed the EPA's air quality standards throughout Connecticut.
- Ozone air pollution can be a significant public health issue for people who suffer from respiratory problems. Exposure to elevated ozone levels can cause breathing problems, aggravate asthma and other pre-existing lung diseases, and make people more susceptible to respiratory infection.
- On April 30, 2018, the EPA Administrator signed a Federal Register Notice designating areas for the 2015 ozone standard (70 part per billion(ppb)).

- Two areas in Connecticut have been designated as nonattainment: (1) New York-N. New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT (New York Metro) which includes Fairfield, Middlesex, and New Haven Counties; and (2) Greater Connecticut consisting of the remainder of the state.
- Overall, Connecticut's air quality is improving. Based on the current standard of 70 ppb, in 1983 Connecticut measured nearly 120 days over the standard (nearly the entire summer). Last year, there were only 20 exceedance days.

Another priority for this Administration is making improvements on Infrastructure

- For EPA, that means water infrastructure.
- It's no secret that New England's infrastructure is aging.
- One of our biggest infrastructure challenges is flooding from large storms – which can be exacerbated when combined with storm surges in coastal communities. EPA is supporting state and federal partners to provide guidance and implementation for coastal resilience.
- Across New England, Over the past 50 years, we have seen a 71% increase in extreme weather events, which can often overwhelm our infrastructure and flood key infrastructure.
- We must understand infrastructure vulnerabilities and adapt.
- We also need to keep working to get the lead out of our pipes.

WIFIA Announcement- we have been talking about everywhere we go as an opportunity for infrastructure improvement.

- The Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (WIFIA) established a federal credit program administered by the EPA for eligible water and wastewater infrastructure projects.
- Amount Available: \$5.5 billion in WIFIA financing for projects totaling \$11 billion.

- The letter of interest submission deadline has just been extended to July 31.

We can't talk about infrastructure without talking about lead

- In Region 1 we are working very closely with our state partners to get the lead out.
- That means we are working very closely with our state counterparts to get the lead out of water service lines.
- We are also working with communities and states on our Lead Remediation and Repair Rule efforts.
- Just to illustrate some of the great work going on:
- I'd like to just highlight a community in Rhode Island that is doing an excellent job implementing innovative solutions on this front.
- Under Mayor Charles Lombardi's leadership, the Town of North Providence is committing \$270,000 in federal grant funds to replace the part of lead lines that leads to homes.
- Providence Water will be replacing the rest of the line on the public side. By removing both parts of the lead lines, North Providence will be taking proactive steps to get rid of lead pipes, a major source of lead for residents.
- Much of the funds for the residential lead lines came from a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from HUD to replace privately-owned lead service lines.
- To tackle the replacements, North Providence focuses on moderate/low income homes starting from the most needed neighborhood.
- In 2018, the Town is planning on replacing 100 lead lines.

- This is an innovative approach that addresses lead pipes- one of the critical sources of lead in children.
- We also have **lead paint** to deal with.
- For the last few years EPA had been conducting geographic initiatives for the Lead Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule- because our housing stock is also generally older.
- Exposure to lead paint is a big deal for children's health, and we have found these geographic initiatives to be helpful to make a difference in that community. Right now, we are beginning our fourth geographic initiative in the NH/ME Seacoast.
- We want to see more work like this happening throughout the state and region.
- HQ is working on an Agency **Lead Strategy**, and part of that lead strategy includes regions coming up with their own.
- We are working on our draft strategy now. It is really looking great.
- It brings together all of the work we are doing on lead into one place and helps emphasize the great progress we are making. I can't wait to share it with you.

Emerging Contaminants

- Emerging Contaminants is an issue that transcends all the New England states. It's one we are very focused on right now.
- In fact, we are working to plan a Community Engagement forum in New Hampshire for our New England states as a follow up to the National PFAS Summit that happened last month.
- EPA's cleanup and drinking water programs continue to encounter emerging contaminants.

- Lately, we have seen a lot of action with Perfluorinated Chemicals or (PFASs) in water.
- PFAS are used in a wide variety of industries and commercial products for their valuable properties including fire resistance, dust suppression, and oil, stain, grease and water repellence. They are used in things like firefighting foam, Teflon, polishes, waxes paints, stain repellants, cleaning products and other items.
- We have coordinated closely to support our state partners' efforts on emerging contaminants.
- Our lab has been doing a lot of analyzing for PFASs in support of our state partners' work.
- We have also pulled together a New England coordination group with representatives from each state to continue the conversation and learn from each other's experiences.
- EPA is committed to working with our state partners to address PFAS issues as they arise.

EJ

- Environmental Justice is something I've focused on my entire career, and I intend to continue that here.
- We have to be focused on communities that suffer from disproportionate impacts to pollution, and we have to help find solutions.
- We will leverage partnerships to do what we can to prioritize this.

Conclusion

- We have a lot of work to do, and I am so excited to be at the helm of EPA Region 1.
- We have a great team in Region 1 who isn't only working hard on the issues, we are also spending some time to improve processes- which we are doing.

- You've heard from the Administrator that we have a goal to streamline our permitting process.
- We also just generally want to make sure we are being as efficient as possible.
- We have a fantastic team to tackle some of the tough challenges we face.
- Thank you for having me today.
- I'd be happy to take some questions.